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RUNCIE RAISES VISION OF ANGLICAN ROLE

NEW YORK -- From bleak Harlem through the multinational brokerages of Wall Street to the opulence of the Waldorf Astoria, the Archbishop of Canterbury hammered home a message of the vast potential that a worldwide Christian vision could bring to bear on the world's problems.

In a grueling 36 hours, Archbishop Robert A. K. Runcie preached his concept of the role Anglicans could play, through six sermons, speeches and addresses, a press conference and private interviews. The May 10-11 visit here was the conclusion of a three-week tour of the States that carried the Archbishop to Tennessee, Maryland, Washington, D.C., California, Iowa, Illinois and New York.

In most of his stops, Runcie has addressed particular issues -- urban problems in Chicago, land use and hunger in Iowa, nuclear war in Washington, refugee ministries in Los Angeles -- and he continued to do so in New York with addresses on ecumenism and divisions between northern and southern hemispheres.

All of Runcie's remarks, however, were undergirded by a perception of the Anglican Communion as it has emerged recently and its role in shaping world dialogue. He returned to that basic theme in his final remarks -- at the Waldorf Astoria on his last night here -- when he said that a sense of the worldwide and historical church "is not an optional extra or luxury. It is indispensable for a fully mature Christian life."

He added, "The Primates' meeting and my visit to your Church have left me even more convinced than before of the vital contribution which Anglicanism has to make to the economy of world Christianity. Our insistence on reverence for scripture and tradition and respect for the word of truth and for reason is even more vital in a time when people are tempted to retreat into narrowly based fanaticism, a world in which fear and anxiety nourish the irrational and the stridently exclusive.

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"In the Anglican Communion and not least in the Church of England we are, I believe, growing into a vision of a worldwide Church where all the parts and members have something special to contribute and where we would be poorer if we were just left with our partial national visions."

Cultivation of this world view could be a vital tool, he asserted, in helping the world community face the future.

"The claims of Jesus Christ are worldwide and this becomes more and more appropriate in a world which is united by vast problems and opportunities too great for any one national state, even this the most powerful state in the world, to grasp. The problems of pollution, arms control, energy, poverty, hunger all have to be tackled by an international effort and this will need the support and enthusiasm of those who regard themselves as world citizens," he said.

In his conclusion, he pointed to a specific role for Anglicans: "The truth is that whatever we choose to believe about being able to insulate ourselves against some of the problems which we see most graphically illustrated in the experience of Africa and Asia, the world is now so politically and economically interdependent that no country can isolate itself from the consequences of disorder and economic disruption in other parts of the world. The oil crisis is a recent striking example of this interdependence. Social attitudes often lag behind new economic and social realities. We haven't very much time to catch up to the new realities, and I believe that a Church that has discovered its own global identity, as I believe the Anglican Communion is doing, may be in a very good position to help a world that urgently needs to discover a global consciousness before it is too late."

His New York tour included a Sunday morning Eucharist at St. Philip's, Harlem, at which he presided and preached; an ecumenical and interfaith Evensong at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine at which he preached; a brief service and greeting with the staff of the Episcopal Church Center; a noon Eucharist at Trinity Church, Wall Street, at which he preached and was the celebrant; a private luncheon address to New York business leaders; a press conference; a visit with the Mayor of New York; a brief service at the General Seminary and the dinner at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel with the Church Club and English-Speaking Union's New York Chapter.

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PICTURE CAPTIONS

81151/1 Archbishop Robert Runcie's formal New York visit began at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Manhattan's Harlem. Runcie preached at a Eucharist which marked the end of a year-long celebration of the parish's 170 years of active social involvement in the city. Here, Runcie is greeted before the parish hall by the rector, the Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston. (DPS Photo)

81151/2 The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, was the focal point of a festive day as Harlem's St. Philip's Parish celebrated its 170th anniversary with the help of many internationally known Anglicans. Here, Runcie greets H. E., B. Akporode Clarke, Nigeria's United Nations envoy. Clarke, who is also chairman of the UN Special Committee on Racism, was one of the lectors at the Eucharist at which Runcie preached. Looking on is Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., of New York. (DPS Photo)

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